

World's Largest Cornucopia Reminds Utah of Importance of Eating '5 to 9'

“Eating 5 to 9 and Feeling Fine” theme abundant during 5 A Day Week”

(Salt Lake City, UT) – When the Utah Department of Health unveils the World's Largest 5 A Day Cornucopia on Saturday, September 28th at the West Jordan Wal-Mart, the huge steel and canvas-wrapped horn of plenty will spill forth with more than 60,000 pounds of fresh Utah produce. Although Utah residents don't have to eat that many pounds of fruits and vegetables to get their minimum number of daily servings, they should be eating more. According to guidelines released in 2000 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Americans should be eating not just 5 **but between 5 and 9** servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

The cornucopia event is part of National 5 A Day Week to encourage Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables. In a recent survey only 20 percent of Utah residents reported eating at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, compared to the national average of 23 percent. According to government dietary guidelines, children ages two to six should eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day; children over age six, active women, and teens should eat 7; and active teen boys and men should eat 9. These figures more accurately reflect the serving recommendations provided when the USDA first published the Food Guide Pyramid in 1991.

Scientific findings continue to support the importance of eating more colorful fruits and vegetables because they may reduce the risk for heart disease, hypertension, certain types of cancer, diabetes, and other diseases.

“Colorful fruits and vegetables ? green, yellow/orange, red, blue/purple, and white? provide essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, and several hundred unique disease-fighting phytochemicals,” said Rachel Johnson, a registered dietitian with the Utah Department of Health Cardiovascular Health Program. “Only fruits and vegetables, not pills or supplements, can provide all of these health benefits.”

Even those individuals who are trying to lose weight could benefit from eating more fruits and vegetables. “We are not recommending that overweight Americans eat more food, but if they want to control or maintain their weight, they could *replace* higher-calorie foods with fruits and vegetables,” Johnson explained. “The high water and fiber content of fruits and vegetables will help keep them satisfied on fewer calories.”

Most people do not realize how easy it is to incorporate 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables in their diet on a daily basis. A serving can be ½ cup of cooked vegetables or fruit, ¼ cup of dried fruit, ¾ cup of 100 percent juice, or one cup of salad or leafy greens. A large salad, for example, can add up to 2 to 3 servings of vegetables.

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In addition to fresh produce, frozen, dried, canned, and juiced fruits and vegetables all count toward the “5 to 9” goal. A glass of 100 percent juice with breakfast, a banana for a mid-morning snack, a salad at lunch, some carrot sticks or an apple in the afternoon, and pasta with cooked veggies and tomato sauce is just one example of how to get 9 servings a day.

School-age children, teenagers, men, African-Americans, and lower income and lower educated populations are particularly at risk for not eating enough fruits and vegetables. Since African-Americans have the lowest awareness of the importance of eating 5 to 9, the lowest intake of fruits and vegetables, and the highest rates of many diet-related diseases, the National Cancer Institute is spearheading a national campaign to reach African-American men between the ages of 35 and 50 with the “eat 5 to 9” message.

The World’s Largest 5 A Day Cornucopia takes place Saturday, September 28, 2002 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the West Jordan Wal-Mart, located at 7671 South 3800 West. The event is sponsored by the Utah Department of Health Cardiovascular Health Program, Wal-Mart, and several other 5 A Day partners, and will feature children’s games, prizes, food demonstrations, 5 A Day recipes, and more. For more information about this event and the 5 A Day Program please contact Rachel Johnson at 801-538-6269, racheljohnson@utah.gov, or visit 5 A Day online at www.5aday.gov.

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